



**Testimony in Support of SB 763, AN ACT
CONCERNING WORKERS' COMPENSATION COVERAGE
FOR POLICE OFFICERS, FIREFIGHTERS AND
EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS WITH POST-
TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER**

**Submitted by Officer Laura Azevedo-Rasulk, Feb. 16, 2017
before the Public Safety Committee**

Good morning Chairmen Larson, Guglielmo and Verrengia, and members of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Laura Azevedo-Rasulk. I am an officer with nearly 15 years of service to the Bridgeport Police Department. I am also a member of AFSCME Local 1159.

I am here to support Proposed Senate Bill 763, which allow post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to be covered under workers' compensation.

I have personal experience with this issue. My incident involved a suspect who shot at myself and two other officers because he wanted to be famous by making a movie (which a juvenile was filming/recording) on how he killed the cops. This happened in 2010 while we were responding to what was supposedly a medical call.

It affected me for years. Every year around the anniversary date I would get so sick and didn't know why. I even took time off from work. I did seek professional help but couldn't keep up due to the co-payment I had to pay bi weekly. I had the honor and privilege to work with a psychologist and that's where I received free treatment because she would ride with me in my police car to deal with mentally disturbed people while also helping me. This kind of patchwork approach is not the way to deal with PTSD.

Sometimes I think I'm ok but last month I worked at a music concert and part of the show they had fireworks and explosives. When that occurred I jumped, looking for cover and reached for my gun. I was surrounded by some of my co-workers who calmed me down and asked why I reacted that way. I felt humiliated.

There are rare and specific occasions where we need PTSD to be covered by workers' compensation. Even though we are trained to deal with these traumatic situation and told to expect them, at the end of the day, we are humans, too. We are parents, grandparents, siblings...and we are affected traumatically. Especially when we encounter homicides, children who are seriously hurt or dead, violent domestic incidents – these are events we associate with as human beings, and they affect us deeply.

So it's not just about being a police officer and getting worker's compensation on this issue. It's about a police officer going above and beyond, doing what no one else would do, risking our lives everyday just by wearing this uniform, and at the end of a stressful day, week, months, or years, we have no one to turn to for help. Everyone gets help from us and solutions to their problems. There are occasions when we need help, too. This bill would do just that.

I appreciate your hearing my testimony and would be happy to answer any questions.